THE USE OF TIME AND SCHOOL SCHEDULING PRACTICES

What the Research Says

When time in classrooms is spent on students being actively focused on learning objectives, students do better at mastering the subject matter (Cawelti, 1999). Fitzpatrick's (1998) research supports the use of instructional practices that increase time-on-task by actively engaging students in learning. Non-instructional time in classrooms should be kept to a minimum. Cotton (1995) suggests that classrooms be organized and managed to minimize disruptions, to keep transition time between activities short, and to establish routines for handling administrative matters.

In effective schools, operational practices are managed to maximize the amount of time allocated for learning. Unassigned time or time allocated for non-instructional activities is kept to a minimum (Cotton, 1995). Core academics are scheduled such that they are least likely to be interrupted by other school events (Fitzpatrick, 1998). Effective schools use alternative scheduling practices to maximize academic learning time, and they also provide instructional support to students in need outside of the regular school day (Cotton, 2000).

What Virginia's Educational Reform Says

Virginia's SOA reflect the importance of maintaining a school environment that maximizes its potential for instructional time. Principals are to protect academic instructional time from interruptions to the greatest extent possible, allowing the maximum time possible to be spent on teaching and learning (8 VAC20-131-210.B). Teachers are expected to use that time effectively to provide educationally sound instruction (8 VAC 20-131-220).

Virginia's SOA prescribe the length of the school day, the length of the school year (8 VAC 20-131-150), and the number of clock hours of instruction that schools must provide in the various courses taught (8 VAC 20-131-80; 8 VAC 20-131-90; 8 VAC 20-131-100). The SOA also offer opportunities for schools to adjust their scheduling to meet these requirements in different ways.

TIME AND SCHEDULING INDICATORS

Number   **Descriptor**

TS 1   *Instructional Time*

TS 1.1   Basing decisions related to the pacing of the curriculum on state test blueprints and on student performance data

TS 1.2   Arranging classroom instructional time to allow for a variety of instructional activities

TS 1.3   Organizing instruction and structuring lessons to maximize student time on task

TS 1.4   Maintaining a high level of student engagement throughout the lesson

TS 1.5   Using classroom instructional time to provide enrichment opportunities and support services to individuals and small groups based on students' identified strengths and needs

TS 1.6   Establishing classroom routines that maximize the use of non-instructional time

TS 1.7   Establishing school-wide organizational practices that minimize unnecessary interruptions to instructional time

TS 1.8   Regularly monitoring the use of instructional time in classrooms

TS 2   *School Scheduling Practices*

TS 1.1   Meeting SOA requirements for length of school year, length of school day, or number of hours of instruction in core areas.
   a. Length of school year (180 days OR 990 hours grades 1-12; 540 hours Kindergarten)
   b. Length of school day (5 ½ hours; 3 hours minimum for kindergarten only)
   c. Number of hours of instruction in core areas (ES: 75% in 4 core areas; MS/HS: 140 clock hours OR 560 total in 4 core areas for grade 6)

TS 2.2   Building schedules that are based on identified learning and instructional needs and support the implementation of improvement initiatives

TS 2.3   Scheduling non-academic events to minimally impact instructional time

TS 2.4   Allocating time in the schedule for teachers to collaborate with other teachers, parents, and students

TS 2.5   Establishing procedures and communicating expectations related to the allocation and use of time

TS 2.6   Ensuring that the time allocated for specific activities is used to complete essential tasks according to established expectations

TS 2.7   Utilizing a school schedule that is conducive to providing intervention and remediation strategies and programs within the school day

TS 2.8   Allocating resources to extend learning time beyond the regular school day

TS 2.9   Regularly monitoring the implementation of schedules and making adjustments, as needed, to maximize efficient use of time